FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

Volume XIX, Number 3, June 1968

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Our purpose: To promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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EDITORIAL

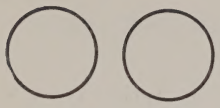
KIND readers have remarked about past issues that some of them appear to have been designed around a common theme.

The present issue will, no doubt, look the same. But the remarkable thing is that the common denominator has been created not by editorial suggestion but by our authors themselves. It sometimes seems that the old saying is true: things are in the wind, and writers, being the most sensitive persons in our society, notice them, observe them, and set them down on paper, with the result that only one or two themes appear to be the only ones that matter at a certain time.

Thus, thanks to our authors (who live all over the country, even abroad, and have little or no acquaintance with each other personally), the present issue is deeply concerned with children, with childhood, with the necessity of keeping a child's faith and hope and curiosity up through the most difficult years of adulthood. One of our current authors, in fact, can be—at the age of twelve—considered a child herself. And even in the scholarly and fascinating article on the Chinese heritage of religious belief there are included quotations, from thousands of years ago, having to do with the value of a child's vision of life.

Why, at the beginning of this particular summer, there should be such a widespread interest and concern with this particular theme it is impossible to say. Perhaps the violence of the past spring has reminded sensitive people of more innocent times. Perhaps it has simply been the inspiration of a season remarkable for its mildness, duration, and beauty.

Not until he was proofreading this issue, indeed, did the editor notice another remarkable coincidence of theme in several articles: that of the grown-up observing a sunset and finding in its brilliant glory feelings not unlike those of humans only recently born.



FAITH, AND THE INNER CALLING

Cyril C. Trubey

The Presence of the Supreme Creator is in man. Faith is a human instinct, and every time we believe we release spiritual powers within ourselves. Faith is evident in intuition. It also resembles the instinctive life in the animal kingdom and by it we seem to know things. Through the use of faith man has the ability to actually ease the mind of a disturbed friend, even without his knowledge. By a positive belief, and a stated assertion that the individual is improving, often he really does. This channeling of Spiritual power in a certain direction is one of the greatest potentialities of man.

However, man's greatest gift is prayer. For there is a living human impulse, perhaps without our conscious knowledge, that supplicates the Most High on our behalf. It is not always necessary to pray orally to gain a Spiritual unity with the Universal Spirit. Every time we meditate upon the Supreme God, upon the truth of life, a contact is being made which is prayer. For are we not talking to the Great Spirit by means of spirit?

It has been stated that faith without works is dead. Perhaps this refers to a faith by rote, which is not really believing. Usually unless one truly desires spiritual contact it will not be forthcoming. The asking will not bear fruit unless faith has blossomed into belief. When the chips are down it may be that God is our only refuge and the Supreme Spirit our only fortress.

In a way all living things draw upon the mainspring of life. Hereby a delicate plant obtains the energy to force its way up through a seemingly impenetrable surface. The Artic Hare of the far north which usually develops in abundance is stricken by a mysterious malady about every tenth year. It is now believed that sun-spot cycles, occurring every tenth year, so deplete the energy normally received by the willow shrubs, that they do not manufacture the vitamins necessary for the rabbit's health. The life balance of the species is maintained by this cosmic cycle.

One may wonder if an animal can think its way out of a dilemma. Or does the spirit power, under stress of fright in a dire predicament, reach back in the imprinted annals of time and bring to the surface an instinct of what to do?

A naturalist hunting in South America was attracted by the cries of a bird fluttering over a leafy spot in a tree. Upon investigating he discovered that the bird, which was a male, was in great distress because a venomous snake was approaching the nest where the mother bird was trying to hide her fledglings under her own body. The snake paused in its inexorable advance, its small glittering eyes fixed upon the mother bird. She did not move, perhaps hypnotized by fright, perhaps resolved to stay,—come what may. But the male flew quickly away.

Shortly he returned bearing a twig covered with leaves in his beak, and now a curious thing happened. Perching near the nest he laid the twig carefully across it, covering his mate and her young. Then he took his station in the tree top and was quiet.

The snake approached the nest, its forked tongue darting in and out. Suddenly the reptile threw his head back as if he had received a sharp blow, turned abruptly around and made his way down the tree.

The naturalist climbed the tree to examine the mysterious twig. He could not identify it so he took it home and showed it to a native friend. He was informed that the bird had plucked it off a bush which is poisonous to the snake and which the reptile is never known to touch.

Who taught the wild bird to use this shield? Was it a hereditary instinct? Or did the father bird think of it himself under the stress of emergency? In some mysterious way he got the message, faith was strengthened by action and lived on, as did the happy family.

Man has been told on good authority "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you."

What we call miracles may take place when the Spirit of the Almighty is released through the spirit of man. But because that Spirit works according to higher laws the so-called miracles are really natural. When an individual changes to a better personality and abandons old habits he is really performing a miracle.

When we thank God for our blessings we are acknowledging the magnanimity of the Universal Spirit,—the giver of abundant

life. And in doing this we develop a healthy outlook. It is far better to rejoice in what we have than to be continually miserable because of a disgruntled attitude dwelling on what we lack. Moreover, in thanking the Creator we are establishing an intimacy that improves the ease of contact. Being grateful for what we have automatically solicits more. Perhaps this is the meaning of the statement, "To him that hath shall be given." Through the inner calling man gets acquainted with himself. He realizes that to exercise the whole man it is necessary to be a part of the whole universal Spirit.

Faith is the knowledge of things hoped for, the substance of things unseen. Without it we can do nothing.

PRIVATE EXHIBIT

Alice Kay Rogers

Look for art in the simple thing
unnoticed in man's hurrying—

a web crocheted in the plaster's crook;
a maple leaf sketched on the wind;
bubble-zircons set in a brook;

yes, look for wonder in the small,
and find each day an exhibit hall.

THANKS FOR THESE

For cool refreshing rain drops
For crystal lakes and seas,
For many rippling water brooks
I thank you Lord, for these.

For radiant glow of sunsets
For wind and gentle breeze,
For all the stars of heaven
I thank you Lord, for these.

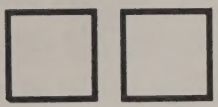
For beauty of the blossoms
For birds and busy bees,
For every clod of soft brown earth
I thank you Lord, for these.

For great majestic mountains
For splendor of the trees,
For broad and fertile valleys
I thank you Lord, for these.

For the icy sting of winter
For fall and drifting leaves,
For spring and summer gladness
I thank you Lord, for these

— Lynda Ann Taylor
(age 12 years)

— By courtesy of Clyde Deniston



A THANKFUL PRAYER

Neal C. Neitzel

Thanks, God. Thank you for children. Bless the boys and girls laughing and playing beneath the window in this kitchen.

When I came home from another week of work, more tired than usual, it seemed, and more discouraged because the promotion I'd hoped for went to someone else, my thoughts were bitter and bleak.

"I am a failure," I told my wife. I was thinking of the dreams that hadn't come true. The plans and ambitions no nearer now than they'd been ten years before when we'd married. I looked at our home, at the furnishings my dear wife had mended, painted, covered and recovered, making things do.

Although my wife said comforting words, I didn't hear them, nor did I return her loving smile. It was late in the afternoon. I stood here in the kitchen, thinking only that it was also late in life.

The great visions seen through the eyes of youth bright with confidence had blurred. Reality and the years had dimmed the burning fires; the routine of sameness and daily problems and frustrations had dulled the sharp sense of purpose with which ambitions must be pursued if they are to be overtaken.

Then, standing listlessly, forlornly at the kitchen window while my wife prepared the evening meal, I heard the children and saw them as they played together in our backyard.

"My father is the greatest salesman there is!" boasted one of the boys, his chubby, round face glowing with pride. "He just got to be sales manager of the company he works for!"

"My Dad is the best doctor in the world!" stoutly declared another boy. "Why, he can make anyone well—no matter how sick people get!"

"Well, my Daddy is the owner of his own garage business," proclaimed one of the neighbor girls. "He works so hard! He even works nights, too!"

"My Daddy is the best Daddy in the world!" announced another little girl. "He plays with me every night. And, on weekends, Daddy takes Mommy and me shopping, and for drives, and to the zoo, and to lots of wonderful places. I love my Daddy so much!"

"Does your Daddy really play with you—every night?" asked the other little girl.

"Not every night, does he?" asked one of the boys.

"Yes! Every night! We have so much fun playing together," I heard the little girl with the golden curls say happily. "Mommy says Daddy is the best man in the world, too!" she said with proud conviction.

The children began playing tag, then. I stood at the window, watching. And thinking about what I'd heard. That is why I am saying this prayer now, dear God.

Thank you for children. Please bless them—all children, everywhere. And, please, God, please bless the little girl wearing the pink dress. Bestow an extra measure of blessing upon that golden-haired youngster if You can, dear Lord.

Now, before I conclude this prayer and turn with lightened heart and renewed strength and hope for the future to smile at my wife, to live again with restored faith and purpose, thank You, God. Thank you for giving us such a wonderful daughter!

OUR MENTAL ATTITUDES

Harry Halsey Starrett

Our mental attitudes create the world we live in; they determine our condition and our station in life.

Health and sickness; success and failure; wealth and poverty; peace and strife, are the fruits of our thinking.

Man can change all these things by changing his mental attitudes.

"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

MY SOUL NEEDS SOLITUDE

Viola Jacobson Berg

My soul needs solitude with Thee,
More time to worship at Thy throne,
More time to dwell on Thee alone,
To aid my darkened eyes to see
The glories of Thy majesty
Revealed in stillness all our own.
My soul needs solitude with Thee,
More time to worship at Thy throne.

With contrite heart and spirit free,
Beholding Thee in glory shown.
Through ageless time with awe we groan
And hunger for Thy mystery.
My soul needs solitude with Thee,
More time to worship at Thy throne.

THE PRAYER OF RELINQUISHMENT

Viola Jacobson Berg

In God's plan for you and me
He's given us a will.
This choice He will not violate,
He waits for us until
We surrender fully
Our right to choose our way,
And then, unhindered, blessing comes
To chase the clouds away.

The giving up of selfish will
Is difficult to do,
Our unknown future, treasured dreams
And independence, too.
Our striving gets us nowhere,
We try so hard for naught.
Oh, restless heart, be still and learn
The lesson He has taught.

His prayer in His dark hour
Was not answered in release.
He bowed His will to God's and drank
The cup to give us peace.
Relinquishing His royal rights,
His pain we cannot know,
But the power released at Calvary
Through ages yet will flow.

We will not block His purpose,
We'll trust though hard the test,
And die to self, and let Him choose,
So He can send the best.

SECRET SOLUTION

Viola Jacobson Berg

How does one
Guide a child
Who does not want to be shown
The way?
Prayer protects
With unseen powerful arms.

GLAD FLOWN BIRD

(IN MEMORIAM—Marius C. Thode)

Tick-tock, tick-tock; tick-tock's the heart
An enigmatic clock for man to bless,
A darkling mystery for minds to solve
With endless endless guess and guess.

When slows the weary pendulum, and stops,
And ears no longer hear its tick-tock tone...
Will something swift! Alive! escape at last
From narrow prison bars of flesh and bone

And is this ticking that we think is heart
This constant, muffled ticking each has heard,
A pale-winged spirit thumping, thumping time
For whirling forth a white and glad-flown bird?

— *Carla Patsuris*

A piece of prose and a poem on the same theme

A TIME OF WORSHIP

— *Emma S. McLaughlin*

Several years ago it was my privilege to be a member of the staff at our denominational Leadership School. During this period, I was teaching a demonstration class of kindergarten children, followed by a seminar for adult workers in this field.

The inspirational time of my active day was the evening

vespers. After dinner we all gathered on a grassy bank along a quiet stream. Sometimes, fishermen waded silently at the bend of the stream, casting for trout. Here, in silent meditation and with hymns of praise we said farewell to the day. Listening to the familiar hymns, I would be busy scanning the faces of my friends, noting the repose or the restlessness of my children and attentive to the evening call of birds. The speaker of the hour called for prayer and, I supposed, most heads were bowed.

Lost in contemplation I continued to gaze at the sky aflame with the sunset, the dark branches of trees holding aloft the color, almost as though they were the leaden separations of stained glass windows. A family of ducks drifted down the stream, disturbing, for a moment, the bright reflections. I followed the words of the prayer in my own mind but I did not lose one moment of the glory around me. Truly, I thought, this was worship of the deepest sort.

Next day, as the observers came for the demonstration session, I was surprised to hear them speaking about a young minister on the staff who didn't close his eyes for the prayer but spent the entire time gazing about him. There was concern among them as to whether or not a proper attitude had been set by the staff in this matter of worship. I was embarrassed to think that they might have noticed I too had been at fault. But I could find no fault. I determined that when we gathered together for the seminar I would evaluate, with them, the word worship. Before that time arrived, the meaning was brought home to them in a more memorable way.

The children attacked the morning with high spirits and for a time I was kept busy. Dur-

ing a lull in the activity I noticed David still clinging to the doorway, not really outside, but not one of us. With children swinging on each hand I approached him, smiling and invited him to come to the book table for a story. The other children were loud in their eagerness, but not David. Seeing the desire in his eyes and not wishing to frighten him further, we left him, still clinging to the door, and began our story. By the time I had reached the half-way mark, he had moved into the room, then he was behind my chair and by the end of the story he could manage a return smile. This *was* progress.

The demonstration session was outlined to include free supervised play, activity and a coming together-time. During the together-time we gathered on the rug. This was, appropriately, the time for worship.

David came to the outskirts of the circle with a shell in his hand. He did not sit down nor participate in the action songs, although he did draw away the attention of the class like a magnet. There *was* a story to be told and a thought to be planted, but I never reached them. Suddenly I tossed the whole lesson plan out the window, figuratively. After all, I *was* teaching children, wasn't I? Not lessons. Who could say definitely, "Now is the time to worship."?

Moving around the circle to David's side I began to talk to him about the shell. Where had it come from? What had lived in it? We turned it over and over, studying the dawn colors of the inside, speculating on the rough, broken edges of the outside and then—we listened, breathlessly, to the roar of the ocean. How wonderful was the gift of eyes, of ears. David passed the shell around the circle and the small faces glowed with interest, the bright eyes were awed with wonder. Worship? *I* thought so, for there was appreciation of a gift, a silence like a whispered prayer. Not one head bowed, except to study the treasure more closely. Not one eye closed. I was reminded of a beautiful poem I had often read to my own children. "A Child's Prayer" by Francis Thompson:

"Didst Thou kneel at night to pray
And didst Thou join Thy hands, this way?
And did they tire sometimes, being young,
And make the prayer seem very long?
I used to think, before I knew,
The prayer not said unless we do." . . .

Worship cannot be turned on and off like a faucet, but wells, spontaneously, from a heart filled with appreciation.

THE KINDERGARTEN CHILD

See how he enters, hesitant and shy,
With just a spark of interest in his eye?
Yet he is here
And we must try to meet his needs today,
Must hold his hand and help him on the way,
Allay his fear.

See how his face lifts trustingly to yours
And how your smile in some small way assures
His troubled mind?
Now to the books you wander side by side
And choose a magic rug on which to ride,
New worlds to find.

He leaves now, running off across the floor,
Pausing to catch the sunlight by the door,
Glad he is here,
Holding his seashell, hearing the lovely sound,
Sharing his joy with new friends he has found—
God has been near.

THE REFINER'S FIRE

Zelma S. Dennis

The oft quoted biblical expression "the refiners fire" holds a special truth for people with creative natures. The old cliche about how fine the gold of the soul when one has suffered, wears a little thin but it does have its measure of truth.

The everyday problems of life do have their abrasive action upon the sensitive soul. But also the law of creativity exacts its toll from this friction, and then from the fire often ensues the masterpieces which enhance our mortal world.

In these times of automation it is a joyous thing to see a free soul and creative mind inflamed into production of inspirations that come from the inner God source. No robot is capable of being affected by the probing, cutting steel of the emotional knife of life itself upon our fragile hearts. The feelings of humankind are always reflected through his creative expression, God speaking in man. Man's strength and his weakness strangely illumined on the creative scale. His passionate heights, and his valley depressions both fed from the same Divine fire. Molding and chasing in the blaze man slowly releases the image that an unseen catalyst has worked in his soul.

Man is the mould wherein the Infinite fire pours the purest thought. Then from the slow shaping and retouching and ennobling flame of life's tragedies and joys come the incarnate dreams of humanity, revealed and shining in the splender of the Divine vision as reflected in creative mankind.

SHIVA — NATARAJA

The Dancing King

The three cosmic activities: creation, protection and destruction, are symbolized by the great rhythmic movement of Shiva — Dancing.

The symbol of creation is the little drum held in the upper left hand.

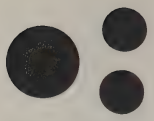
The other right hand makes the gesture of Abhaya — Mudra which assures protection: Fear not! The other left hand indicates the way of salvation: refuge in the Lord!

Under the goot of Shiva is a demon, symbol of evil.

* * * *

"In meditation on the Divine Dance, we shall begin to see life in its totality. Too much analysis distracts the mind and leads it into confusion. We should avoid such dispersion and come forth from illusion in order to live solely by Love of Him. His grace will give us knowledge of the Truth."

— *Saint Manikkavashaga*



CHRIST AND CHINESE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Part I

The Rev. Canon S. K. Lee

How Old Is Chinese Culture?

There was a time when scholars dismissed any period before the Chou Dynasty as legendary history. Excavations in Anyang from 1928 to 1937 had, however, revealed an advanced civilization dated to the fourteenth century B. C. The Shang bronze sacrifical vessels showed a culture of sophistication and intricate technique, in short, the full flowering of the Bronze Age. The Chinese scholar Tung Tso-pin is convinced that Pan-keng moved his capital to Anyang in 1384 B.C. and that the last phase of Shang culture lasted until 1111 B. C., when the Dynasty was overthrown by the Chou invaders. More recent excavations made in the Fifties had shifted the centre of Shang study from Anyang to Cheng-chou, the ancient capital of the Shang. There tombs, houses and bronze foundries were unearthed. But the most remarkable discovery was the city-wall of Cheng-chou which, according to Kuang-Chih Chang's study, *The Archaeology of Ancient China*, had an average width of twenty metres, an average height of ten metres and a total length of 7195 metres. It is clear that Cheng-chou was no mean city. It was in fact the centre of political and religious life.

The Religion of the Ancient Chinese

The inscriptions on the oracle bones tell us much about the belief of the ancient Chinese. Almost all the bones refer to the

Supreme Deity as Ti. But there was one fragment which had the term Shangti which is still our term for God today. It was probably dated to the thirteenth century B. C. When the Shang rulers assumed the title of Ti or Emperor, the term Shangti was then employed to distinguish God from the mere rulers on earth.

Sacrifice took an important part in the life of the Shang people. Everyday there was sacrifice to the ancestral spirits, to valleys and mountains, and to Ti who controlled the rain and wind, the building of cities, the installation or dismissal of officers. The Shang people were wine-drinking and they prepared a spiced wine to invoke the descent of the spirits. Libation cups were found in the sites of Cheng-chou and Anyang. Those of Anyang were especially noted for their excellent workmanship.

In the Chou Dynasty, religious life was still centred in the worship of Shangti, though the concept of Tien or Heaven now began to replace the cruder notion of Ti. Bronze inscriptions and early texts show that from the beginning of the Chou Dynasty there emerged the doctrine of the Mandate of Heaven. According to the Duke of Chou's manifesto, the Shang rulers for many generations had fear of Heaven and concern for the common people. They therefore retained the decree of Heaven. The last rulers, on the other hand, "gave way to licentious living and wine, neglecting the duty of sacrifice to Heaven, closing their ears to the cry and suffering of the people. Heaven therefore sent down ruin on Ying (Shang)." The Duke of Chou further warned the Chou rulers that if they did not treat the multitude well and offer sacrifices, they too would forfeit the Mandate of Heaven. It is important to note that the Chinese, like the Hebrews, did not divorce religion from ethics.

The Confucian Way

The architect of Chinese culture was, of course, Confucius.

His great intellectual and moral stature has seldom been in doubt. Mencius called him "the sage of all seasons." In him all the different aspects of Chinese spirituality have found a creative synthesis. Confucius, however, was not only noted for his wisdom and ideals but also for his passion for going out into the world to reform it. Down the ages, Confucianism has produced many eminent statesmen, scholars and apologists who boldly defended the Confucian Way. One thinks of Han Yu of the Tang Dynasty who denounced the Emperor for his veneration of an alleged bone of the Buddha. One thinks of Tsang Kuo Fan who attacked the Taipings for burning Confucian temples and neglecting the classics while devoting their time to the reading of Christian scriptures. Confucius has also inspired a large company of martyrs (notably Wen Tien Hsiang of the Sung Dynasty) who gave their lives for the defense of the Way.

Wherein lies the greatness of Confucius?

Confucius was born in 551 B.C. in an age of disorder and civil strife. Suffering was widespread and Confucius became the champion of the people. It was not easy to bring his lofty message across. Often he must have felt an acute sense of loneliness. He wandered from state to state in search of a ruler who was ready to carry out his principles. Rulers, however, were interested only in power politics and time after time Confucius was rejected. But the years of homeless exile were actually most fruitful in the building of his saintly character. Once when the Master and his disciples suffered from hunger, Tzu-lu was perplexed that men of virtue should endure such hardship. Confucius replied that it was only a man of virtue who was able to stand firm. The ordinary man, in face of hardship, might lose his integrity. Neither poverty nor danger could touch Confucius. "With coarse food to eat, water to drink and my bended arm for a pillow, I still have joy in the midst

of these things." There was a certain serenity in Confucius that endeared him to the Chinese people. When his disciples were asked to give a description of their master, Confucius said, "Why did you not say something about this being the kind of man he is—in his ardour forgetting to eat, happy in forgetting his misery; not knowing that old age is close at hand."

The image of Confucius as a rigid and austere teacher is far from historical truth. There was little of the ascetic in him. He did not withdraw from the world. He said "If I cannot live amongst my fellow men, what can I live with?" For Confucius, music is always a source of sheer delight. He played the lute. He liked good eating and drinking in moderation. He enjoyed the fellowship of his students. How close Confucius came to our Lord in his attitude toward life. "The Son of Man has come eating and drinking and you say 'Behold a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners.' Yet wisdom is justified by all her children."

The religion of Confucius has been a subject for debate among scholars for many generations. Some would have no hesitation to call him an agnostic. He said "You do not yet understand death?" Again he said "Respect the spirits and maintain the proper distance from them." It is clear that Confucius warned people not to be nailed down by the veneration of spirits and by the fear of the hereafter. Furthermore, it would seem that his primary interest was not in metaphysics. Tzu-kung said of Confucius "Of the master's teaching on human nature or the Tao of Heaven we have no knowledge." His religious concept had gone a long way from the belief in an anthromorphic supreme being. Yet he had a profound conviction in the moral order of the universe and in the Power that stood for benevolence and justice. He believed that Heaven had entrusted him with a sacred mission as the champion of China's culture. In danger, he dismissed his enemies as power-

less against him in the face of Heaven. In distress, he was comforted by the belief that Heaven would not permit him to fail. "But Heaven understands me!" In short, he was a man with a divine mission. Thus the doctrine of the Mandate of Heaven of the early Chou was further developed. Once he told Tzu-lu that he had done his praying long ago. It is possible that he would like to convey that his whole life was a long prayer.

If Confucius seldom spoke about the Tao, the way of Heaven, he said enough to let us know the outline of his thoughts. The Tao is the all-embracing moral principle. "If all under Heaven has the way . . ." Jen—human-heartedness—is but a reflection of the heavenly order. Yet it is not remote. "If I really want human-heartedness, then it is here."

But there was one thing in religion which compelled his attention. Confucius took great pleasure in ritual. The term Li or ritual originally meant sacrifice. It is the outward sign of an inward grace. It is not enough merely to feel sincere emotions. There must be proper vehicles to express those emotions. Li imparts a certain rhythm to life. Yet Confucius, like Christ, always placed the inward experience above the outward expression. "I cannot bear to see the forms of Li gone through by those who have no reverence in their hearts."

With Mencius (372-289 B.C.), the greatest exponent of the Confucian tradition, we come to the latter half of the fourth century B.C. Again, moral action is stressed. Man must lead a life of human-heartedness and justice. But in a world of folly and wickedness, how can he strive to be good? Mencius' answer is that human nature is good. For instance, man has an innate sense of compassion, an instinctive sympathy. The way to goodness is to keep one's innate nature intact. "The great man is he who does not

lose his child-like heart." Except you are like little children, you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Furthermore, Mencius spoke of the all-embracing spiritual energy of the universe. This vital energy also works within man. Thus man can seek harmony with the heart of the universe. A follower of Mencius living in the third century B. C. put it thus: "The real man—the man of real human-heartedness—reaches out to the spiritual power of Heaven." This seemed to be quite akin to Taoist thought. Yet in one important respect, Mencius and his disciples differed markedly from the Taoists. According to Mencius and his disciples, this spiritual energy is not to be nourished by inner quiet but by moral action. Confucianism is essentially this-worldly. Theologians today have been advocating a secular Christianity. May they not find in the Confucian way a congenial spirit?

The Spirit of Taoism

By the latter half of the fourth century B.C., it was evident that there was something very deep in man's heart which Confucius' orthodoxy had failed to fulfill. Confucian thought had not satisfied man's quest for Reality and the ultimate meaning of existence. The Tao Te Ching and the Chuang Tzu thus arose to fill the void.

If Tao indicates the all-embracing moral principle among Confucianists, it is the ultimate Reality in the thinking of the Taoists. The Tao is the source of all things. To Tao all under Heaven will come as streams and torrents flow into a great river or sea.

"The Supreme Tao, how it floods in every direction!
This way or that, there is no place
where it may not go . . ."

Man's duty is conformity to, and identification with Tao, "To those who have conformed themselves to the Tao, the Tao readily bends its power." Thus while Tao is not personal, it is not merely a force of nature. The very fact that man himself can enter into union with it implies that it possesses a spiritual quality. This concept of Tao may throw some light on our contemporary quest of finding an expression for Reality. Bishop Robinson, for example, is no longer satisfied with the notion of God being up there or out there. Like Prof. Tillich, he would rather believe that God is the ground of all being, the creative ground and meaning of all our existence. Bishop Robinson goes on to say that "in the unconditional constraint of love, he (man) encounters something that speaks to him not simply of his own deepest self . . . but of what profoundly is true of Being itself." In their limited way and in their imperfect knowledge of divine love, the Taoists seemed to have caught a few glimpses of the Reality which is 'ultimately gracious' and prepared the ground for some aspects of our contemporary theological understanding. Lao Tzu insists that Tao is the supreme mystery, beyond the reach of words or description. "If the Tao could be expressed in words, it would not be the unchangeable Tao." Christian theologians, alas, have a passion for definition but no human language is adequate for the expression of Divine truth. As Prof. H. E. W. Turner of Durham wisely said, "If the problem really lies in the inadequacy of all language applied to the Divine and not merely language, it seems questionable whether it ought to be attempted." Yet some language, however inadequate, is necessary. John Lawrence in a review of Bishop Robinson's book *Honest to God* said ". . . metaphors such as shepherd, king, height and depth and many others help to express something of the mystery . . . . There is no harm in children being taught to look upwards for God, provided that they are also taught to look within."

The state of union with the Eternal is also the endeavor of Chuang Tzu, the poet of freedom and the greatest Taoist of them

all. He believed that the way of inner quiet is the key to enlightenment. "To a mind that is quiet the whole universe surrenders." Stillness is the secret of that power which "could shift heaven and earth." Again Chuang Tzu said "I and all things in the universe are one." This unity of heaven and man is the recurrent theme of Chinese philosophy and became the basis of the Chinese way. We could trace an inkling of this thought even to Confucius. "Only Heaven is great," he exclaimed. "Only Tao could imitate it." To be in conformity with Heaven is the common goal of all Chinese thought.

THE ETERNAL NEED OF MAN

Velta Myrle Allen

Love is the greatest need in all the world,
For neighbor, self, humanity, and God.
Its power can make a paradise, and change
Where bitter hate corrupts and bears ill fruit.
Love gives a warmth where nakedness is cold;
Security, where none was known before.
It rests the soul where turbulence once bred
Satiety. . .It brings a peace within,
Without, and spreads an aura everywhere
Enveloping each loving thought of God
In His creation, beautiful and good.
For where love is there cannot be aught else—
For love is God, and God is ever near
Awaiting man's eternal need of Him!

THE WASTED YEARS

Phyllis Malone

I was active in the Chapel program at Naha Air Base, Okinawa but that about terminated my Christian life. I could walk through the sanctuary doors on Sunday morning and at the same time be thinking about a dress that I wanted to wear to a party that evening. My husband and I would go to choir practice because we enjoyed singing in a choral group. After exercising our vocal chords it was an easy jump from there to the club. From God's house to the fun house and back again didn't present a problem in our lives.

Most military bases have a Vacation Bible School during the summer. I found a joy in teaching my kindergarden class about Jesus. I wasn't quite sure why I found a satisfaction in presenting these lessons to my little ones. "Thank goodness, I did," I told myself at least once a day. "So few mothers make themselves available to Chapel work, and Bible School teachers always end up being glorified baby sitters," I smugly added. I was so positive that my good works were cementing stars in my heavenward crown.

One day after class I mentioned to the Chaplain that I didn't have much respect for young mothers who didn't show enough concern to be useful in Vacation Bible School, yet sent their children every day. He being a Godly man who had had the same problem for years looked at me in kindly manner and said: "Parents unconcern will always be with us, but the little ones will be with us for such a short time. They must learn about the love of Christ while their minds will absorb it without question."

I did not care for his thoughts on the matter, especially since he was not in full agreement with me, so I dropped the subject. "Some Chaplain," I snickered to myself. Thoughts of indifferent mothers almost robbed me of the warm feelings I had for my class.

During our sojourn in Okinawa families were housed in rather

aged quonsets huts instead of the present typhoon proof structures. Our abode stood on sturdy three foot high pillers to keep the rats from nesting under the house. It's curved wooden framework reminded me of a wind tunnel, but it also had its fond memories. Our hillside lawn was robed in kelly green all year around. The yard was clothed in clusters of flower gardens carefully tended by a toothless Okinawan papasan who often suffered from a wine saki hangover. Our quonset faced the East China Sea. Sunsets in Okinawa are unique. There is a short period of softness just before evening envelops the island. The surface of the sea appears so quiet and unruffled. The sun bids the day goodnight, and a sea gull searches for a resting place. I recall standing on the screened-in porch just absorbing the pleasure of a flawless scene. I remember clouds that resembled giant spoonfuls of marshmallow cream balancing themselves on the evening horizon. This scene always caused my heart to feel saturated in a spiritual way. But sometimes a loneliness instead of an elation. It made me think of my relationship to my Savior, but in the form of a question. What was my relationship to Christ? I had accepted Him as Savior when I was twelve years old while attending a youth convention. Something was missing in my life, but the answer continued to escape me. I was sure my husband had similar feelings. Even then in my unawareness God was beckoning to me with a silent longing.

After two years on the island we were sent back to the United States. Shortly after the children and I arrived at my husband's new station near Kansas City, Missouri a tornado struck our community. Nine hundred homes were damaged or destroyed. We escaped to a neighbor's basement minutes before the storm nosedived in all directions. When fifteen of us pulled ourselves out of the basement window and looked at the aftermath, we thought it was the end of the world. Most of our house had vanished. I noticed a square of raw silk hanging on a rafter. It was all that was left of yards of drapes that I had labored on with such vigor.

Our furniture was standing where it had been prior to the storm. It was covered with debris, but it was there. The furniture looked naked and lost perched there with the void of walls and a roof. Why were we saved from such violence, yet most of our belongings left intact, when some of our neighbors had lost their lives and many were staring at their only visible possession, the subflooring of their homes.

That evening we had to watch over the remains of our home until the National Guard arrived. Looters were rampant. Our minister, Rev. Phillip Needles of the Ruskin Heights Methodist Church was there within an hour after the storm struck. Our congregation gave us much love, financial and physical help during our period of rebuilding. As we look back over the years, we see the tornado as a blessing. It was the beginning of an awakening of the desire to seek God while He could be found, the exploration of being willing to place Christ first in our lives because He first loved us. The answer my spiritually dormant heart was seeking was for faith. I had not learned to trust because until now my faith had not been tested. God had a brochure of unrevealed plans for me and my family.

For a long time I looked at most of these preceding years as wasted years. God could not utilize us during these times as we had not made our hearts available for His use. Once our Lord allowed our family to suffer and caused us to rely on His understanding and not our own, we had the genesis of rendering ourselves to Him. How thankful we are that our Heavenly Father is so benevolent in His mercy. He cannot offer us all of His gifts at once. We wouldn't know how to accept them. So He plants a seed, waters a tender sprout, nourishes a bud, prunes away a lifeless vine, rejoices in each new blossom and is triumphant over every branch that brings forth fruit. Now I realize that time has no periods of wasted years, but seasons of learning, leaning, depending, and abiding in God the Father.

OVERCOMING!

Alice Richmond

Wars blazing, need not birth a Cadmean victory, sharp
Cruelties gene-spawning toward further ignorance barbed.
Inspired vision sees, Our Father loved a sun to rise expansive
That soft a cool unknown dozing one carefree night had blurred—
Kind, peaceful tender Light invited swift by God awakened.
Our wayward probing He dissolves, through prayered days faith
streaming,
He wills a pregnant sun red-orange, her loveliness to spread;
His light He shares: truth's blissfulness, serenity-clothed in mercy.
This understanding, like a forested animal sure-going, tranquil
Browses unafraid: claims certainty
in green upright trees' protective boughs;
Hope-rearing man walks bravely with all, brothers then:
Love sheltered firm.

Unending, man's restless energy should not seep negligent
Through uninvited wars, scare-heated. Serenely apparelled, we
weave
God-mountainous truth melded: joy rounds our earth blessed high
Courage expectant: *knowing* divinity's strength in overcoming!

THE PICTURE OF A SOUL

Esther Belle Heins

The artist who paints portraits will
Endeavor to portray,
His subject to advantage, so—
Considers long the way
The shadows fall upon the face,
Caresses too, the hair;
Since they accentuate the light—
He places them with care.

Dark shadows, and Christ knew them well—
Help those who trust, endure,
With patience, heavy burdens, pain,
That souls expand, mature.
The pictures of such faithful souls
Are pleasing in God's sight,
They bear the signature of Christ
And glow with holy light.

GOD'S RESOURCES

Alma L. Fisher

"Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me."

"She touched the hem of His garment and straightway she was WHOLE." What she thought within came true in reality. What are YOU thinking? Are you dwelling on the illnesses or the limitless resources of God?

"And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God."

This almighty power is just as strong today as it was when Jesus was here in person. Through our conscious awareness of him we make the contact which "makes us whole."

Launch out into the deep. Step firmly on God's promises, and claim your divine birthright. George Washington Carver once said, "Dip down your bucket where you are." God's limitless resources are right where you are. Abide in his holy word and find new meaning for your life.

"Through faith and patience inherit the promises."

"My Word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that whereunto I SEND IT."

Do you really believe that? Do you believe that you can send your word to the different parts of your body and have them respond to your word of blessing, peace, strength, harmony, adjustment, health? Read that promise again and again and ask yourself if you are ready to put this into practice in your own life. Jesus said, "Greater things than these shall ye do." Are you willing to become

so conscious of your oneness with him that this can be accomplished in you? Jesus said, "According to your faith be it unto you." Therefore, with your faith completely centered in God's word, begin now to send forth your word in his all-powerful name.

Life more abundant quickens you (name any part of your body) now. By the power and authority of Jesus Christ, you are recreated, renewed, restored into newness of life.

Give yourself this blessing daily until it becomes a vital part of your being.

"Thy faith hath made thee whole."

"If a man is in Christ he becomes a new person altogether—the past is finished and gone, everything has become fresh and new."

DEFINITION
(Freedom)

Elinor O. Gray

How define a silken thread
so strong that,
looped around a nation,
it holds fast?
Or, so tenuous,
it snaps in two
at the merest whisper
of doubt,
which leads to fear,
which leads to . . .
enslavement?

NOTICES and COMMENTS

NEW ADVISOR. Marion Freeman, whose name will be familiar as a frequent contributor to these pages, has kindly accepted our invitation to become an advisor to FIP in the Northeastern Area.

COPYRIGHT. Although cost is minimal to procure copyrights for original literary material appearing in publications like FIP, it has been FIP's policy not to copyright each issue as it appears. The chief argument for this policy is that a publication like FIP, designated to cross all borders of country, creed, and race, ought not to restrict the use of its contents by other publications here and abroad which share its purpose. The chief argument against this policy has been presented by its contributors, who feel that they cannot afford, as professional writers, to submit their work to FIP without some protection against indiscriminate use by anyone anywhere. At a recent meeting of the Board of Trustees it was decided that for the sake of our writers—and in the hope of attracting more and more of them—the policy will be changed. Beginning with this issue, all of FIP's contents will be copyrighted by FIP unless otherwise indicated.

WANTED. More and more readers have written to us lately. Their letters have offered congratulations, compliments, and appreciations—all of which have been gratefully received by the staff. Complaints and disagreements have been sparse. Without desiring to bring the whole world down on our heads, the staff would be interested in hearing opinions that are occasionally other than nice. The purpose of this desire is to begin a page or two of letters which will not resemble an advertisement for ourselves.

FELLOWSHIP GROUP AT WORK. Advisor Rhoda E. Hung of Cambridge, Mass., gave luncheon to a group of ladies from the Methodist Church, in Wakefield. They were greatly impressed with Fellowship in Prayer and expressed enthusiasm in interesting some of their friends in our work. Mrs. Hung also gave a dinner party in honor of Emilie, Lady Coote.

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